

REMARKS

Claims 4-45 are currently pending in the application. Applicant thanks Examiner for the indication that claims 4-22 are allowable. By this amendment, claims 1-3 have been cancelled, and new claims 27-45 have been added. The foregoing separate sheets marked as "Listing of Claims" show all the claims in the application, with an indication of the current status of each.

Claims 4-22 were allowed in the previous office action. In addition, claims 24 and 25 were identified as being drawn to allowable subject matter if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, the Examiner points out that the 35 USC 112, second paragraph of claim 23 must be obviated in order to render rewritten claims allowable.

By this amendment, claims 1-3 have been canceled without prejudice to simplify issues for allowance. The cancellation of claims 1-3 makes moot a portion of the outstanding substantive rejections lodged under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). New method claims 27-45 have been added which parallel the allowed device claims. These method claims are drawn to a Japanese letter input method for inputting letters in a letter set. These claims do not present new issues since each step recited in each claim is a logical extension of the allowed device claims 4-22. New claims 27-45 are patentable over the references of record for the same or similar reasons that device claims 4-22 have been allowed.

Regarding rejections of claims 23-26 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and the rejection of claims 23 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) in regard to Royer et al., Applicant respectfully submits that the features recited in claim 23 (arrangement of predetermined letters and symbols in a concentric circle form in M radially disposed directions and steps; and inputting of letters and symbols by designating in a predetermined sequence, coordinates corresponding to the M directions and N steps using a position input device) are not anticipated by Royer et al., who neither show nor discusses the radial disposition of letters and symbols in a concentric circle form in M radially disposed directions and steps. Further, with reference to the 35 U.S.C.112, second paragraph rejection, Applicant submits the following: M and N are positive integers. However, it is a matter of actual fitting that any person intending to produce a system by using the present invention arranges Japanese kana letters in how many rows and columns and likewise provides what symbol array, and it is thought that no specific threshold value should be

set forth in the claims. In Japanese, it is easier by arraying the consonants and vowels differently. Since in Japanese 10 consonants, i.e. “a”, “k”, “s”, “t”, “n”, “h”, “m”, “y”, “r”, and “w” and five vowels, i.e. “a”, “i”, “u”, “e”, and “o”, are present, when it is considered cases of assigning other functions than the 50-letter set function to particular reports, we have $M = 10$ and $N = 5$.

As for the maximum value, it depends on how many different symbols are made available for expression. For example, when a system utilizing the invention is based on a different system (such as the JIS non-Chinese character system, JIS X 0208-1990), there are 524 letters and by simply evenly dividing the letters for M and N , 529-letter expression is possible with $M = 23$ and $N = 23$. However, it would also be possible to set $M = 524$ and $N = 1$ to achieve 524 letter expression.

Applicant thus requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 23-26.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings on the grounds that they do not include a reference sign “5” related to the determining key mentioned on page 17, line 18. The Examiner notes that a replacement sheet could not be found in the file wrapper even though it was identified in the response filed December 12, 2003. In view of the objection, Applicant attaches an additional replacement sheet for Figure 1 which should now overcome the objection.

The application now includes claims 4-45. This amendment addresses each of the outstanding rejections and objections, and should now place the application in *prima facie* condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims at an early date is requested.

Formal Matters and Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 4-45 of the present application be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at 703-787-9400 (fax: 703-787-7557; email: ruth@wcc-ip.com) to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

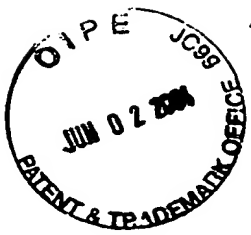
If an extension of time is required for this response to be considered as being timely filed, a conditional petition is hereby made for such extension of time. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2041.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth E. Tyler-Cross', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Ruth E. Tyler-Cross
Reg. No. 45,922

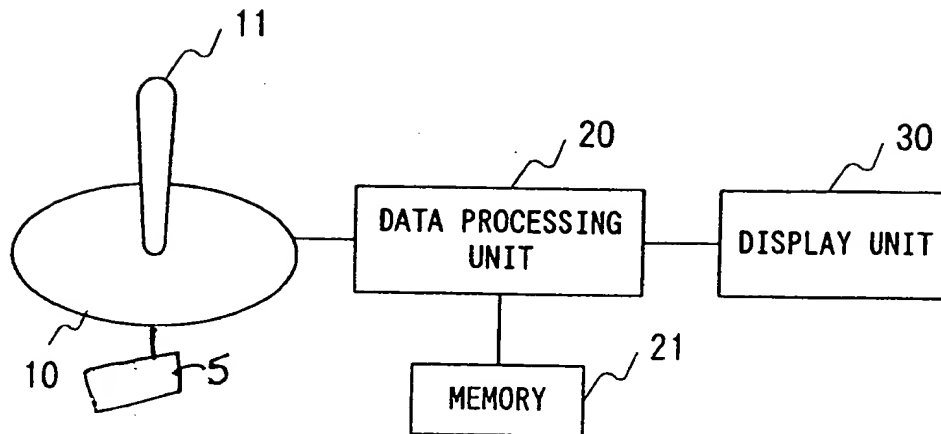
Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P.C.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, VA 20190
703-787-9400
703-787-7557 (fax)



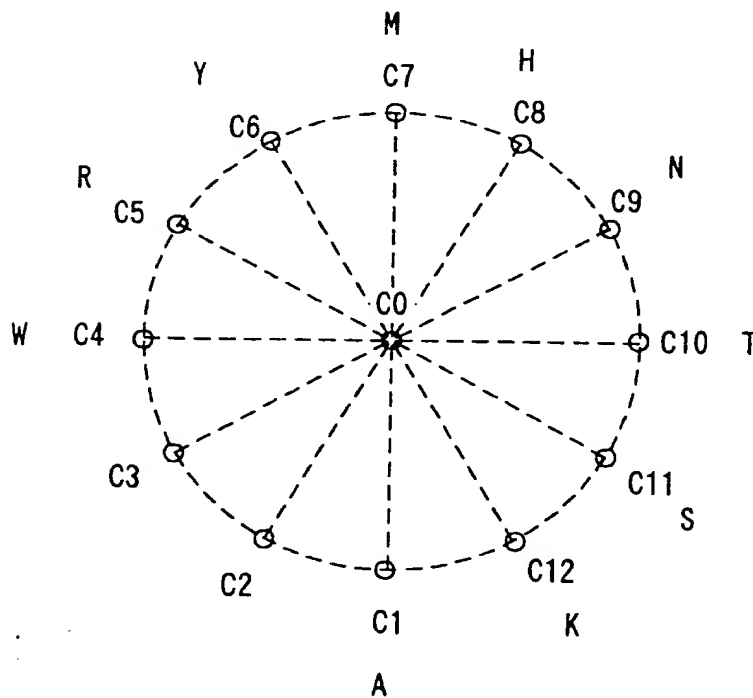
Annotated marked-up drawing

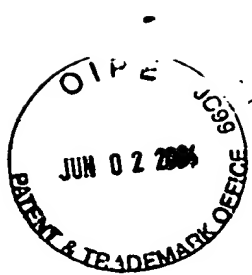
FIG.1

(a)



(b)

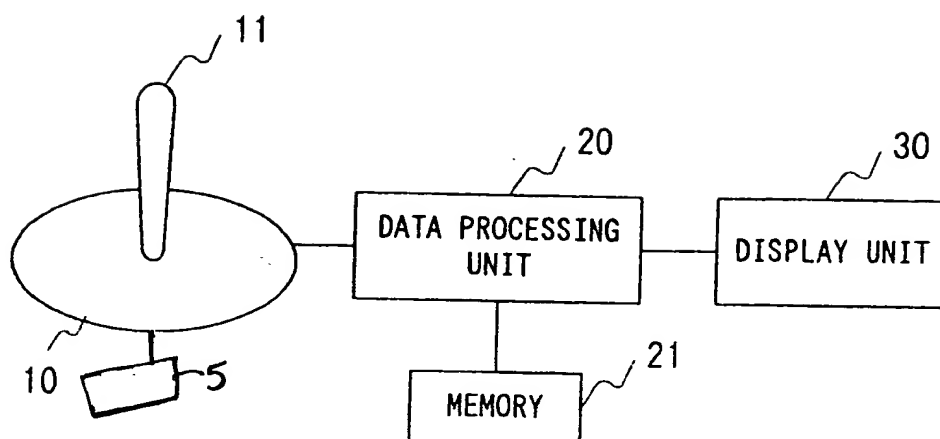




Replacement sheet

FIG.1

(a)



(b)

